

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 10600, San Francisco, California 94102 tel 415 352 3600 fax 415 352 3606

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TO: Design Review Board Members

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Andrea Gaffney, Bay Design Analyst (415/352-3643; andrea.gaffney@bcdc.ca.gov)
Yuri Jewett, Shoreline Dev. Permit Analyst (415/352-3616; yuriko.jewett@bcdc.ca.gov)

SUBJECT: Potrero Power Plant Station Redevelopment; Second Pre-Application Review
(For Design Review Board consideration March 11, 2019)

Project Summary

Project Proponents. California Barrel Company, LLC and Port of San Francisco

Project Representatives. Enrique Landa, Erin Epperson, and Tina Chang (Associate Capital, Developer); Kevin Conger and Justin Aff (CMG, Landscape Architect); Kristen Hall (Perkins + Will, Urban Designer); Sam Yao (SGH, Coastal Engineer); and Angelo Obertello (CBG, Civil Engineer)

Project Site. The approximately 29-acre project site is located on the southern waterfront of the City and County of San Francisco, at the location of the closed Potrero Power Plant Station. The project site is bound by the 22nd Street to the north, the Bay to the east, 23rd Street to the south, and Illinois Street to the west (Exhibit 2).

Existing Conditions. The site was first developed in the mid-1800s and used for manufactured gas plant operations. Around 1910, a power plant was constructed that remained in operation until 2011. Though now closed, the power plant is still extant at the project site. On part of the project site there are various buildings associated with the power plant. An active PG&E switchyard is located along Illinois Street. The project site is located within Third Street Industrial District, a sub-district of the Potrero Point Historic District. Due to the previous land uses, PG&E is required to remediate areas of the project site. Remediation for the majority of the site has already been completed, and ongoing remediation activities are planned to conclude by or before 2023.

No public access to the Bay exists at the project site along the 1,170-foot-long, predominantly riprap shoreline. There are several over-water and in-water structures associated with the historic use of the site, including several intake structures, several outfalls, a sheet pile wall and a brick seawall. The nearest shoreline access exists at the adjacent property to the south running along the property shoreline edge to the City-owned Warm Water Cove Park, at 24th Street, and includes two public shore parking spaces accessed from 23rd Street. There is no

public access to the adjacent shoreline at the Pier 70 complex to the north. The Pier 70 site immediately to the north is proposed for redevelopment as a mixed-use residential and commercial site with a waterfront park (Exhibit 2).¹ The San Francisco Bay Trail and Blue/Greenway runs along the perimeter of the project site on Illinois Street, where it consists of a sidewalk and striped (Class II) bike lanes.

While the majority of the project site is owned in fee by the project proponent, portions of site are owned by the City and County of San Francisco, the Port of San Francisco, and PG&E.

Proposed Project. (Exhibits 3-6) The project presented in the attached exhibits does not illustrate a specific design, but rather a conceptual one based on design controls that will be used as a framework and the parameters for the ultimate design of the project. The proposed project would redevelop the site to allow for a mix of uses including residential, commercial office, life/science office, retail, parks, community facilities, light industrial, hotel, and assembly uses. The project involves demolition of some, but not all of the existing structures on site, and the construction of a street grid and approximately 5.4 million gross square feet within buildings ranging from 65 to 180 feet in height (roughly 5 to 18 stories), with one building at 300-feet tall (approximately 30 stories). The power plant structure is proposed for adaptive reuse as a hotel, though the project proponent is also exploring an alternative in which the plant is mostly demolished with only the 300-foot-tall boiler stack retained and repurposed and a new building is constructed in place of the power plant structure (Exhibit 28). At full buildout, the project proponent estimates that the project would generate approximately 5,500 to 6,100 residents and 4,150 to 6,000 employees at the project site.

The proposed project would include approximately 6.2 acres of parks and open space, including the majority of the 2.6-acre area within the Commission's 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction. The most significant park areas within the project site are the Waterfront Park, running the length of the approximately 1,170-foot-long shoreline, and Power Station Park, located across two blocks within the interior of the project site. A rooftop public soccer field is also proposed atop the parking structure (Block 5) (Exhibit 9).

1. **Waterfront Park.** The 3.7-acre Waterfront Park would run north-south along the shoreline, ranging from approximately 60 to 220 feet in width between the water's edge and the westernmost portion of the park along Delaware Street. The Waterfront Park is organized around a minimum 20-foot-wide segment of the Bay Trail (also the designated Blue Greenway at this location). The Bay Trail would connect to the planned trail at the Pier 70 site and run south to 23rd Street, where it would turn west and connect back to its current alignment at Illinois Street. The project proponent conceptually divides Waterfront Park into the sub-areas discussed below, which consist of a series of parks and plazas that tie the waterfront back into the urban fabric (Exhibits 9 and 11). Since the previous DRB meeting on April 9, 2018, the waterfront park design has been revised to provide a more cohesive character with distinct areas for active and passive recreation. Information on site interpretation has been included in the exhibits (Exhibit 29-30.) The proposed waterfront park areas are described roughly from north to south:

¹ The Board reviewed designs for the proposed redevelopment of the Pier 70 site at its October 6, 2016 and February 26, 2018 meetings.

- a. **Craig Lane Paseo.** (Exhibit 11) This pedestrian thru-way would provide a perpendicular connection to the Bay Trail, running approximately 40 feet between the terminus of an east-west vehicular road (Craig Lane) and the Bay Trail. This section would connect to the shoreline at the proposed Pier 70 project site.
- b. **Block 4 Shoreline Area.** (Exhibits 11 – 12, 27) This quieter area includes café seating areas, public seating areas, the Bay Trail and a shoreline planting area. Since the previous review the shoreline planting area has been reduced in size and includes small paths and seating areas.
- c. **Humboldt Street Plaza & Overlook.** (Exhibits 24-26) Located between Blocks 4 and 9, Humboldt Street would terminate at the waterfront at an approximately 1,300-square-foot Bay overlook. The Bay Trail passes between the overlook and an inland plaza. The approximately 16,000-square-foot plaza lined with trees would be constructed between the two buildings (Block 9 and Block 4), running from Delaware Street to the Bay Trail. Space is provided to accommodate market stalls and event tents within the plaza, to be erected on event days. Block 9 to the south would comprise a 65-foot-tall residential or hotel building (stepping up to 85-foot tall), and Block 4 to the north would be a terraced residential or R&D/office building (65-foot tall stepping up to 85-feet tall.) Both buildings would include ground floor cafés or restaurant seating along the waterfront. The widened overlook is a new element of the plan added since the previous DRB meeting
- d. **Turbine Plaza and Bay Terrace.** (Exhibits 22- 23) This portion of the waterfront would include an approximately 3,500-square-foot waterfront lawn, a 6,750-square-foot Bay overlook terrace with public seating, and stair access to a potential recreational dock. The Bay Trail passes inland along these amenities. Inland of the Bay Trail is the Power Station's Unit 3 building with Turbine Plaza. The project proponent is exploring reuse of Unit 3 as a hotel, in which case café or restaurant seating at the ground floor waterfront is envisioned. Directly north of the Unit 3 building Turbine Plaza would be a partially enclosed public atrium (approximately 5,000 square feet) and waterside plaza (3,500 square feet) linking Delaware Street and the Bay Trail, which could incorporate a remnant craneway structure from the power plant. An alternative in which the Unit 3 building is demolished is also under consideration, in which case a new hotel or residential building would be constructed at this location with a different plaza configuration. The Turbine Plaza and Bay Terrace designs have been further considered since the previous review, with refinement to the types and locations of seating areas.
- e. **Recreational Dock.** (The proposed project may also include a recreational dock (120-foot long and 18.5-foot wide) extending beyond the low tide zone to provide access from the site to the bay for fishing and suitable recreational vessels. Since the last DRB review, an accessible path down to the dock has been incorporated into the riprap shoreline in front of the Stack Plaza.

- a. **Stack Plaza and Garden.** (Exhibits 19-21) This 22,500-square-foot plaza would include a combination of hardscape and planted areas surrounding the power plant's 300-foot-tall boiler stack, which will be retained and reused, possibly as a café or bar. The Bay Trail at this location would run adjacent to the riprap shoreline, separated by an approximately 5-foot-wide planting strip. The design of the plaza has been significantly revised since the previous DRB meeting, taking the Board's comments into consideration to create a unified ground plane aesthetic with Turbine and Humboldt Plazas.
 - b. **The Point.** (Exhibits 17-18) This 19,275-square-foot park area is envisioned as a quieter space with planted areas, a grove of trees, an informal discovery play area, and casual seating and picnicking facilities. A potential Bay overlook viewing platform is proposed to be constructed atop the existing 'Station A' concrete intake structure that extends approximately 50 feet into the Bay. A trail is proposed to run along the western property line between 23rd Street and the southern property line. This extension could be adapted to become the designated Bay Trail with proper coordination with the existing dedicated public access at the neighboring property (Exhibit 12). Since the last DRB review, the design has been revised to allow the public to get closer to the shoreline in certain areas, and the interface with the adjacent property has been further developed. The intersection between the overlook, the Stack Plaza and the Bay Trail has also been further refined into a singular space.
2. **Power Station Park.** (Exhibit 9) The 1.2-acre Power Station Park, located outside of BCDC jurisdiction, would split across two blocks within the interior of the project site from Georgia Lane to Delaware Street. The prominent feature within the eastern portion of the park would be a flexible lawn for a variety of activities, including youth soccer, outdoor movies, community events, and casual lounging and play. The eastern portion of the park would also include seating and barbeque areas. The western portion of the park would be a mostly hardscape plaza, with fitness equipment, sculptural play features, public seating, and an architectural canopy structure. The park would intersect with the 0.7-acre Louisiana Paseo at its western edge, a car-free north-south plaza running between the 23rd Street and the proposed Humboldt Street. The paseo would feature seating, game tables (e.g. table tennis and chess), planters, and bike parking.
3. **Streets.** (Exhibits 3, 31-33) The proposed streetgrid extending into and across the site would provide a public realm network for accessing the waterfront from Illinois Street. The streets have been designed consistent with the San Francisco Better Streets guidelines that provide space for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. 23rd Street and Humboldt Street would connect back to Illinois Street. Delaware Street would be the north-south street closest to the waterfront, one block away from the Bay Trail.

Special Events. (Exhibit 14) Per the *Design for Development* document, food and drink vendors could be located within the Waterfront Park, with up to five mobile carts and three semi-permanent kiosks. Special events are proposed to occur within the waterfront park for a period of up to 72 hours per event, up to twice a month, up to 12 events each year. The project proponents anticipate these 12 events will be open to the public, though some or all events could be ticketed. At Turbine Plaza and within the atrium adjacent to the Unit 3 building, however, the proposal is to host private events such as weddings.

Phasing. (Exhibit 8) The project would be constructed in approximately seven overlapping phases, with each phase lasting three to five years. Following the initial demolition, site preparation, and rough grading for the entire site, the first phase of construction is anticipated to start on the southeast portion of the project site and the last phase of construction would end in the northwest portion of the project site. Total construction is estimated to occur over a 15-year period and is anticipated to run from the beginning of 2020 to the end of 2034, but could occur over a somewhat longer or shorter period, depending on market conditions and permitting requirements.

Maintenance and Management of Public Access. (Exhibit 7) The majority of public access areas are anticipated to be transferred in the future to a Master Association, which will assume ownership from lands currently owned in fee by California Barrel Company, LLC, with the remainder owned by the Port of San Francisco. All public access areas, including those on Port-owned lands, will be maintained by the future Master Association.

Approvals Timeline. The project proponents have presented a schedule for the completion of entitlement by Fall 2019 with an application to the Commission in Fall/Winter 2019.

Resilience and Adaptation to Rising Sea Level. (Exhibit 15) The project proponents indicate that flood and sea level rise protection measures would include physical improvements to the shoreline—including construction of rock slope revetments, berms, and bulkheads—and grading to raise the elevation of the entire project site. Existing Mean Higher High Water is at elevation +6.40' NAVD88, and would increase to +13.3' NAVD88 at 6.9 feet of sea level rise. The grade at the shoreline would be increased by approximately 3 to 7 feet (from +13' to +17.5' NAVD88) to provide protection against a 100-year storm surge event in addition to 6.9 feet of sea level rise (SSE at 2100 = +16.9' NAVD88). This is based upon State Guidance 2018 sea level rise projections in at 2100 in the high emissions scenario for a medium-high risk aversion site. The finish floor elevations for the ground floors of all buildings fronting onto or within the Waterfront Park would likewise be elevated to +18.5 NAVD88.

Prior Board Review. (Exhibit 10) The Board reviewed this project on April 9, 2018. The project proponents have revised the designs to respond to the Board's comments and advice. For specific responses to comments, please refer to **Appendix A** which outlines the response to comments. Other changes have been noted in the proposed project description section.

Commission Findings, Policies & Guidelines

Physical and Visual Access. The San Francisco Bay Plan (Bay Plan) policies on Public Access state, in part, that “maximum feasible access to and along the waterfront and on any permitted fills should be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline....” Bay Plan policies on Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views state, in part: “All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay....” The Commission’s Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part: “View opportunities, shoreline configuration and access points are factors that determine a site’s inherent public access opportunities.” The guidelines also state that viewing the Bay is the “most widely enjoyed ‘use’ and projects should be designed to enhance and dramatize views of the Bay.”

The Bay Plan policies on Recreation state: “Interpretive information describing the natural, historical, and cultural resources should be provided in waterfront parks where feasible.” The Commission’s Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part, that public access spaces should create a “sense of place” and should be designed in a manner that “feels public,” and “makes the shoreline enjoyable to the greatest number of people.”

The Bay Plan Recreation policies state, in part, that “[d]iverse and accessible water-oriented recreational facilities...should be provided to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population and should be well distributed around the Bay and improved to accommodate a broad range of water-oriented recreational activities for people of all races, cultures, ages and income levels.” The policies state that waterfront parks should be “provided wherever possible,” and that they “should emphasize hiking, bicycling, riding trails, picnic facilities, swimming, environmental, historical and cultural education and interpretation, viewpoints, beaches, and fishing facilities.” Where practicable, the policies state that “access facilities for non-motorized small boats should be incorporated into waterfront parks.” Additionally, parking that accommodates expected use should be provided, as well as “launching facilities, restrooms, rigging areas, equipment storage” and should be accessible to ensure boaters can easily launch their watercraft.

The proposed project would provide an approximately 3.7-acre waterfront park, which would include a minimum 20-foot-wide Bay Trail, overwater Bay viewing platforms, a lawn, planting areas, several hardscape plazas, a recreational floating dock, an interpretive play area, and a variety of public seating areas. Some additional amenities commonly associated with waterfront parks, particularly amenities associated with launches for small boats (e.g., restrooms, equipment storage, etc.), have not been identified as project elements within the attached exhibits. Additional information regarding historic interpretive elements have been provided for this review. As noted before, remnants of the historic use of the site are proposed to be retained and incorporated into the Waterfront Park design, such as the boiler stack, Unit 3 building, and craneway structure.

Circulation. The Bay Plan policies on Public Access state, in part that “[i]mprovements should be designed and built to encourage...movement to and along the shoreline...” and that “[a]ccess to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare where convenient parking or public transportation may be available. Diverse and interesting public access experiences should be

provided....” The Commission’s Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part, that a shoreline development should “...provide a clear and continuous transition to adjacent developments,” “use local public street networks to inform shoreline site design and to extend the public realm to the Bay,” and “provide connections perpendicular to the shoreline.”

The proposed project would extend the current street grid along 22nd and 23rd Streets to within the site (though 22nd Street would be developed as part of the adjacent Pier 70 project) and construct a new internal street grid and various pedestrian ways. A parking-protected bike lane (Class IV) would run along the north side of 23rd Street, while striped (Class II) bike lanes would run along the south side of 23rd Street, Maryland Street and Georgia Lane, and a shared (Class III) bike lane would run along Humboldt, Delaware and Georgia Streets. Outside of the project boundary, a striped (Class II) bike lane would be provided along Illinois Street and 22nd Street between Illinois and Louisiana Streets. East of Louisiana, along 22nd Street, a shared (Class III) lane is proposed.

Approximately 83 on-street parking spaces would be provided within the development, including 11 accessible parking spaces, as well as passenger and freight loading zones. In addition, an 819-space centralized parking facility is proposed adjacent to the southern switchyard (Block 5), and 1,803 below-grade or podium parking spaces would be provided within buildings across the project site.

A 20-foot-wide minimum, multi-use (Class I) trail would be constructed on the shoreline to serve as the San Francisco Bay Trail, also the San Francisco Blue Greenway at this location. The trail would run from the planned connection with the Pier 70 site at the north to 23rd Street to the south. A 20-foot-wide Bay Trail extension at the southern end of the site is proposed which might could connect with the existing adjacent property and could become the designated Bay Trail route in the future.

Sea Level Rise. The Bay Plan policies on Public Access state, in part, that “...public access should be sited, designed, managed, and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding,” and that “[a]ny public access provided as a condition of development should either be required to remain viable in the event of future sea level rise or flooding, or equivalent access consistent with the project should be provided nearby.”

As discussed above, the project includes a variety of responses to achieve resiliency to inundation anticipated from a 100-year storm surge after 6.9 feet of sea level rise. These responses include raising the grade of the site at project inception, and constructing or strengthening rock slope revetments, berms and bulkheads. Upon raising the grade of the site, there will be a roughly 2-foot difference in elevation from the proposed grade at the Pier 70 (+15.5’ NAVD88) site to the north and an approximately 3-foot difference in elevation of the project site and the neighboring property to the south, requiring the construction of a retaining wall on land that would presumably act as a shoreline protective device in the future should the neighboring southern parcel remain at its current grade. Existing grade is about 6.5 feet above current Mean Higher High Water. With the proposed grade, the Bay Trail would be almost double the distance to the current water level. Given a medium to high risk aversion, high emissions scenario, the Bay Trail would not be at the current relative elevation to the water until the year 2080.

Board Questions

The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following issues regarding the design of the proposed public access:

Physical and Visual Access:

Is the proposed public access—in terms of area and the amenities provided—sufficient to accommodate the expected level of use from new residents, employees, and visitors to this segment of the **shoreline**?

1. Does the design of the public space take advantage of the Bay setting, and does it provide for adequate opportunities to get close to and experience the water?
2. Are the public access areas designed in a manner that “feels public” and makes the shoreline enjoyable to the greatest number of people?
3. Will the proposed public access facilities provide a sufficiently broad range of water-oriented recreational activities for a diverse population, including people of all races, cultures, ages, income levels, physical abilities, and interests? Are there additional amenities needed to achieve this type of access?
4. Does the Board have guidance on the configuration or interface of café seating and public seating to ensure the public seating is available to the public?
5. The hotel use envisions being able to hold private events in Turbine Plaza. Are there any design considerations to ensure the adjacent public access remains inviting to the public during private events at Turbine plaza?
6. Does the Board have advice on proposed location and size of the kiosks in relation to visual access to the Bay?
7. Does the Board have any further thoughts on the incorporation of site remnants into the waterfront park to tell the story of the history of the site?

Circulation:

8. Does the proposed project provide clear connections for all users to the Bay from Illinois Street?
9. Does the design minimize the potential for conflicts among pedestrians and cyclists within the shoreline open space area?

Sea Level Rise:

10. Are there additional opportunities to provide interim access closer to the shoreline and Bay waters as part of the proposed adaptation and resiliency measures?